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Identical letters dated 11 February 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

With reference to the letter issued as document A/68/694-S/2013/766 on 24 December 2013, I should like to convey to you the following information:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia affirms that, since the Syrian crisis began, it has consistently supported efforts to arrive at a peaceful resolution and has never ceased to cooperate with the international community as it responds to the humanitarian crisis caused by the war the Syrian regime has waged and the crimes against humanity that the regime has committed against its people.

The Syrian regime is persisting in its attempts to occupy the United Nations and the Security Council with a pack of lies and waging a campaign to distort Saudi Arabia's position on the Syrian crisis. This is nothing but a petty, desperate attempt on the part of the regime to deflect the international community's attention from the atrocities and systematic violence it is committing. The Syrian regime is attempting to hide its violations of human rights, international human rights law and international humanitarian law under the guise of what it calls the war on terrorism and takfirist ideology. It is no secret to the international community that the only source of terrorism in Syria is the Syrian regime itself. The party that is promoting a duplicitous campaign against terrorism would do better to put an end to the terrorism it perpetrates against its people.

Saudi Arabia condemns terrorism in all its forms and affirms that terrorism has no religion or nationality. Itself a victim of terrorist attacks and the target of extremists, Saudi Arabia plays a leading role in international efforts to counter terrorism, eliminate extremism and respond to takfirist ideology. It is well known that Saudi Arabia led efforts to establish the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and, in August 2013, contributed $100 million in support of the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It further demonstrated its leadership by establishing the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Vienna in 2011. Combating extremist

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ideology and promoting a shared understanding between different religions and cultures are two of the Centre's most important functions. In keeping with Saudi Arabia's conviction that sectarianism is a threat among coreligionists, the Muslim World League responded to the call of King Abdullah and launched the Mecca appeal, which calls for the promotion of communication between all Islamic sects, rejection of partisanship and fanaticism, and achieving understanding among religions and cultures in order to bring about and maintain world peace. Any call, from any entity, that deviates from the principles of Saudi Arabia's policy of rejecting terrorism and extremism and striving for coexistence, peace and security for all humanity is unacceptable and rejected.

The region is going through difficult times. The Syrian regime continues to commit crimes, spread fanaticism and sectarianism among a single people and the entire region, and torture and humiliate our brothers in Syria. Such conditions are fertile soil for those who espouse deviant ideology. Saudi Arabia has consistently strived to protect its people from the danger of being thus deceived and has employed various means to that end, the most significant of which was the promulgation of a royal decree in 2010 that limits the authority to issue fatwas to the Council of Senior Religious Scholars and warns that any person who contravenes that injunction shall be held accountable and subject to severe legal penalties. Since the Syrian crisis began, Saudi Arabia has continued to work with Syria's neighbours to prevent any Saudi Arabian citizen from travelling to Syria.

Saudi Arabia has called for the immediate withdrawal of armed foreign forces and soldiers from Syrian territory. That would enable Syrians to choose their own future without foreign interference, preserve Syria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and realize the aspirations of the entire Syrian people, without discrimination. However, the Syrian regime continues to rely on mercenaries, bring in Iranian Revolutionary Guard troops and Hizbullah militias, authorize foreign occupation of its soil, fragment Syrian national unity and threaten the country's territorial integrity.

Saudi Arabia, in cooperation and solidarity with the international community, will not falter in extending assistance to its Syrian brethren in their struggle against the terrorism of the Syrian regime and its human rights violations.

Saudi Arabia calls on the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. It should refer the perpetrators of crimes against humanity to international justice mechanisms and put an end to the suffering of the Syrian people and stop betraying them.

I should be grateful if this letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 110 on measures to eliminate international terrorism, and of the Security Council. Please note that we will provide you with additional information, if necessary.

(*Signed*) Abdulmohsen F. A. **Alyas**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.